

THE PETROGRAD CONFERENCE

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to day disturbances, strikes and bread riots were reported. From day to day they appeared to get worse. The streets were thronged with workmen who struck work because they were *Collapse of* starving. Trains were wrecked, there *law and order* were conflicts with the police, and the Cossacks were called out to preserve order. Then came shots and casualties, and still there came the reassuring sentence : " If order is more or less kept to-night and to-morrow without serious loss of life, the Counsellor of the Embassy is inclined to think trouble will blow over, as it has done before.⁵¹ There is certainly a proviso about " the food problem being solved " and the political problem—less important—not to be lost sight of. On the very day of the revolution, when the Military Attache wired that all the Guards at Petrograd had mutinied, killed their officers, broken into the artillery departments and appropriated the guns : when mutineers were in complete control of the situation, and the soldiers without leaders or officers, we had a sentence from the Ambassador : " Excitement will probably quieten down *Buchanan's* for the present if there is no active *optimism* provocation to-day." Why not ? It had all happened before—perhaps not in a form quite as aggravated, but still bad enough—h—and relapsed into sullen acquiescence. But there was a point when it became quite clear that this outbreak was of a

different
character and had attained graver dimen-
sions than anything that had occurred in
the past* The Petrograd garrison
deserted
the Czar. All now depended upon
the Army at
the Front. Were they loyal to Nicholas
II ? If they